

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LONDON 01623 290947Z
ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

FOR EUR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN ONLY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: UK, US, PFOR
SUBJECT: HARTMAN-SYKES MEMCON, JANUARY 28

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN AND DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY SYKES MET FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES JANUARY 28. THE TWO MEN BRIEFLY REVIEWED THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:
2. MBFR - HARTMAN SAID NEGOTIATIONS WOULD NEED "MORE POLITICAL STUFFING" AND ASKED WHETHER HMG HAD ANY IDEAS ON MOVING THE FRENCH. SYKES SAID, "NO, THEY'LL BE FRIGHTFULLY STUFFY." IF THE SOVIETS ARE INTERESTED, SYKES SAID, THEY'LL ACCEPT THERE IS A GAP, OTHERWISE THEY'LL JUST GO ON TEASING US.
3. SALT - HARTMAN WARNED SYKES NOT TO UNDERESTIMATE THE DIFFICULTIES IN GETTING SALT THROUGH THE BUREAUCRACY.
4. NATO - HARTMAN EXPLAINED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S GOAL WAS TO SAVE MONEY ON DEFENSE EXPENDITURES, BUT NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF FORCE COMMITMENTS. ON THE CONTRARY,

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HE WANTED TO TAKE A NEW LOOK AT FORCE DISPOSITIONS AND STRATEGY. HE WAS PREPARED TO CONSIDER ADDITIONAL FORCES IF THERE WERE A COOPERATIVE EFFORT. GREATER EFFORT FROM ALLIES WAS ESSENTIAL IF CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT WAS TO BE FORTHCOMING.

5. AWACS - HARTMAN ASKED ABOUT BRITISH TIMING AND SYKES

ANSWERED THAT HMG HAD REALLY ALREADY DELAYED LONGER THAN IT SHOULD HAVE. HE WARNED THAT BRITISH WERE AWFULLY CLOSE TO DEADLINE; THAT IF NO DECISION ON AWACS WAS NAILED DOWN BY LATE MARCH OR APRIL, UK WOULD HAVE TO OPT FOR NIMROD. HE NOTED THAT NIMROD MEANT LOTS OF JOBS AND THAT THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION, AND THAT IN STRICTLY NATIONAL TERMS, NIMROD OVER-THE-WATER SURVEILLANCE WAS JUST AS GOOD AS AWACS. HE SAID IT WAS UP TO US TO FORCE GERMAN HAND.

6. ESTIMATES OF US/SOVIET STRATEGIC BALANCE - IN LIGHT OF PUBLICITY OVER TEAM A/TEAMB ASSESSMENTS HARTMAN AND SYKES SPECULATED WHETHER THERE MIGHT BE SOME ADVANTAGE TO HAVING NATO CONDUCT AN ASSESSMENT OF US/SOVIET STRATEGIC BALANCE. SYKES SAID HMG WAS PUTTING OUT ONE PAPER EXPLAINING WHAT HAD BEEN IN NEWSPAPERS, AND WAS WORKING ON A SECOND INTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF ITS OWN. HE EXPECTED THEY WOULD COME OUT CLOSER TO TEAM A ASSESSMENT. HE ADDED THAT THERE WAS SIMPLY TOO LITTLE HARD EVIDENCE IN THE ANSWERS TO THREE QUESTIONS POSED BY TEAM B.

ARMSTRONG

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